THE RAGTIMER

NOVEMBER 1968
DECEMBER 1968

PUBLISHED BY
THE RAGTIME SOCIETY
DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF CLASSICAL RAGTIME

NEW RELEASE FROM

arpeggio

THE MUSIC OF JOE JORDAN
BY LOIS DELANO

At the writing of these notes, Joe Jordan of Tacoma, Washington, is eighty-six years old. Though his continuing involvement with music through the years has often made him reluctant to reminisce about ragtime and popular music around the turn of the century, his interest in preserving and further popularizing his own compositions of that era is displayed in this record. Played by Mr. Jordan's friend and pupil, Lois Delano, also of Tacoma, the selections date from 1902 through the 1920's, and mirror both the composer's personal skill in the ragtime style, and his involvement with several phases of popular music of that era.

It was Joe Jordan's involvement with writing, arranging, performing, and conducting, and the many fellow musicians with whom he has worked through the years that have made him an historically important figure. His prominence, beginning at least by 1900, is revealed best by his prolific musical output: rags, ragtime songs, instrumental compositions for all types of ensembles, show tunes, scores for silent movies, moving up through World War II songs to the present, when Joe continues to compose and arrange.

It would appear that Jordan's skill as an arranger and conductor kept him involved with notable musicians and groups throughout the Ragtime Era, and provided a vehicle for many of his own compositions. Quite notable, for instance, was Jordan's position as musical director of the Pekin Theater - the first all-Negro operation of its kind - in Chicago around 1904. As such, he composed and arranged music and productions, as well as directed the orchestra at this significant landmark in Negro show business. Joe's later association with James Reese Europe and his orchestra, as arranger and assistant conductor, brought him further prominence. Also notable were groups which Jordan himself organized, among them the 'Memphis Students' - a touring ensemble of singers, dancers, and instrumentalists - begun in 1905, and later, his 'Ten Sharps and Flats'- a full-scale band, with both of which he toured the States and Europe. It would seem most fortunate that a man of Joe Jordan's interest and stature in the world of ragtime and other popular forms, working for years behind and before the public spotlight, has a sizable number of compositions to his name which can be presented as an authentic record of the style of composition and performance of the day.

Miss Lois Delano, playing Jordan's compositions on this recording, heightened her enthusiasm for the lore of ragtime by becoming a student of Joe's a few years ago. With considerable skill and ardent zeal, she assimilated a large number of the compositions and much of the style of her teacher, working both from published music and unpublished manuscripts, under (by her own admission) the rather exacting eye of Mr. Jordan.

It is with confidence, therefore, that we can present these selections as authentic musical documents, as well as fine performances.

- DAN GRINSTEAD

ARPEGGIO RECORDS wishes to extend special thanks to both JOHNNY MADDOX and DAN GRINSTEAD, who generously contributed to the production of this album

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arpeggio ARP-1205

THE SELECTIONS - -

DOUBLE FUDGE - a piano rag, written in 1902.

NAPPY LEE - originally a band composition, written in 1903 and inspired by the "nappy-haired" trombone player in a group for which Jordan composed.

J. J. J. - another piano rag, from 1905.

PEKIN RAG - one of Jordan's compositions for the orchestra performing at the Pekin Theater in Chicago where he was musical director. This rag is from 1904.

THE DARKEY TODALO - a piano rag from 1906.

THAT TEASIN' RAG - a song, and perhaps Jordan's best known composition, written in 1909. The listener may recognize the melody of the third strain as having been lifted by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band a few years later, in their composition, 'Original Dixieland One-Step.' For this performance, Miss Delano adds two special ragged versions of the trio, not in the sheet music, arranged for her by the composer.

LOVEY JOE - a song, with words by Will Marion Cook, written in 1910. It was this composition, written specifically for Fanny Brice at the suggestion of Flo Ziegfeld (for whom Jordan was working at that time), that brought her stardom overnight and made her a permanent star of the Follies.

CORSICA - a song from 1915.

MOROCCO BLUES - an instrumental number written about 1920. The composer's band, 'The Ten Sharps and Flats,' recorded this piece shortly after it was written.

TANGO RAG - also an instrumental number, from 1913. It may be noted that CORSICA, MOROCCO BLUES, and this piece all show evidence, in subject matter and musical style, of the composer's travels and awareness of the appeal of international "flavor" in popular music.

WHIPPOORWILL RAG - a piano rag.

HALF AND HALF - from about 1915, written for the popular 5/4 meter dance craze of that period.

I'M GOING TO EXIT - from 1905. A spoof song about a crap game.

Cover Design by Anne Arpin

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY is a non-profit organization for people interested in Ragtime. Services include the publication of this magazine about all phases of classic Ragtime, the printing of sheet music, and maintenance of hard-to-find Ragtime books and records. We also record on our own label and associate label, bringing you performances of both old and new Ragtime.

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RAGTIME...

UNDER YOUR HAT

It gives us a good feeling of accomplishment in following up our October issue with this further effort. As stated then, it is our hope that you will hear from us more frequently. Since promises of future performance have not worked out too well in the past year or so, we feel now that we must let results in the future speak for themselves.

We think it wise to repeat some facts that are neither intended as an apology nor as an excuse. The Society is a non-profit organization operating without the benefit of paid servants. Since the work is all done by the volunteer help of members and friends fully engaged otherwise in the pursuit of a livelihood, it will be obvious to you who are involved in volunteer activities from time to time that good planning often suffers, for that reason, from plain lack of time and coordinated effort.

To sum up - we will proceed to do the best we can. For your part, please continue your support of the Society and your interest in its purpose. The end result should prove to be worthwhile.

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THE MUSIC OF JOE JORDAN played by LOIS DELANO is the latest release from the Society in the record department. This is an extremely fine LP and it carries very special implications in the preservation of Classic Ragtime. It contains the ingredients and qualities of a collector's item. It is the only record in the long play family that we know of, which is devoted entirely to the works of Joe Jordan. Further pointed out to us by both Johnny Maddox and Dan Grinstead, is the fact that Miss Delano's performances are strictly in accordance with Jordan's own rigid discipline as her teacher. Her interpretations are therefore clothed in an authenticity that will be appreciated. Finally, it offers much encouragement to the distaff side of our membership who struggle with the rest of us to master the intricacies of Classic Ragtime at the keyboard. We think it is a record you will enjoy and treasure.

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REPRINTED FROM

(From time to time, THE RAGTIMER will feature articles taken from old magazines, old books etc. etc., and will present them under this heading 'Reprinted From'. We encourage all members who discover an article from any old source relative to ragtime to please send it in for possible reproduction in this newsletter. Following is an article from the old Walter Jacobs magazine - "MELODY". This was an extremely fine magazine, issued each month by publisher Jacobs. It contained many articles relating to ragtime and other popular music of the day. George L. Cobb, composer of 'Russian Rag', was a monthly writer for the magazine, and, was also a song-critic. Some of his criticisms were scathing!).

MELODY MAGAZINE [February 1919]

Dr. Muck, once a leader of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, some time ago assured us in the most solemn and authoritative manner that ragtime was poison and that we were poisoning the musical life of the future at its very fountain-head when we allowed the youth of the country to devote themselves to ragtime in such widespread fashion as is seen today. He moaned in distress on the occasion of a visit he paid to a subscriber to the Boston Symphony Orchestra and found a gay collection of ragtime phonograph records in that gentleman's library, and declared that this circumstance occasioned in him the grief one feels over the loss of a dear friend. Poor Dr. Muck! do you not feel sorry for him; and not only that, are you not sorry for yourself also, getting poisoned all the time and helping to poison all the other fellows that are going to come after you? This is rather a serious matter, is it not? Let us look into it closer.

The scandalized doctor did not go to the trouble of explaining the why and the wherefore of these terrible statements, so if we want an explanation we must find it out for ourselves. In the first place, who is Dr. Muck anyway? Let us take a second look at him. He once led the Boston Symphony, one of the best orchestras on this earth, and he probably received a very high salary. The Boston Symphony is composed of players each of whom was individually excellent before he joined the organization, and these players became collectively excellent by daily practice for years under the direction of other leaders. The task of Dr. Muck, then, was to continue the good work of others, and he can hardly claim the honor of making the Boston Symphony Orchestra what it is today.

In the light of these facts his importance is somewhat reduced; still in all fairness, his standing was exalted and he must have felt that standing when he denounced our national ragtime so strongly without giving us a single reason and expecting us to take his bare word only. So much for Dr. Muck.

Now as to ragtime -- the joyous music of our own which in spite of all criticisms we have persisted in for twenty years without any sign of abatement, and the appeal of which has been felt around the world wherever music is loved!

Unlike the symphony, ragtime does not require years of study to learn it or to listen to it with intelligence; it can be learned by the average unit of the masses within a few months, and listened to with pleasure by anyone, whether possessed of musical experience or not. It contains all the essentials of real music, viz: rhythm, melody and harmony; it affords scope for inspiration, and a melody with a ragtime rhythm may be just as truly beautiful as a melody with a rhythm of any other kind. As for harmony, while an average ragtime tune is harmonized simply enough, it may be and often is elaborated by rich

harmonic progressions identical with those to be found in the works of the best classical writers. I have examined ragtime songs by the score, noted the harmony used and found the very same forms again and again in the works of Chopin and others. Yet while in the case of Chopin these harmonies are accounted great and glorious, they must be set down as poisonous and immoral when used in ragtime. This one word "immoral", by the way, sums up the judgement of the honorable Olive Fremstad (opera singer) concerning ragtime; but why the C-sharp minor chord, for instance, should be pure and holy and beautiful when used in the "moonlight sonata," and poisonous and immoral when used in a ragtime piece, surpasses my comprehension. I doubt if even Dr. Muck or anybody else could explain it.

It may be admitted that ragtime is not equally good -- that some of it may even be accounted trashy -- but this is not a reason to condemn it from top to bottom, because the same thing can be truly said in regard to music of any other kind. We all know that there was plenty of musical trash before ragtime was ever thought of, and plenty of such trash may be found today without taking a single step into the field of ragtime. Mr. Stark, the well-known musical publisher of St. Louis, had the same thing in mind when he referred some time back to those "cold skeletons" dignified by such names as "Preludiums" or "Valse Syphonique." Yet this sort of trash excites nobody's criticism -- ragtime alone must be made the goat and the outcast; indeed, considering the manner in which year after year it has been cursed from the heavens above to the earth below, the wonder is that it has not long ago perished from the face of the globe.

It should not be forgotten that in the study of ragtime there is ample opportunity to develop at least the fundamentals of many things which are considered of vital importance in classical music; for instance, technique, tone-quality, strict time, etc., things which the bloated pedagogue is accustomed to rave about and to claim for his very own. Ragtime pupils learn technique, and learn something also about graduations of tone; the pedagogue has no monopoly of these things. Another thing also may be pointed out, namely, that when learning ragtime first the pupil is able to discover whether he possesses a natural equipment sufficient to warrant him in the study of music more deeply. In some cases this is so, and the study of classical music may be pursued with every prospect of success. In other cases, where the mind of the pupil has been cast in smaller limits, he becomes a ragtime player anyhow, and can thus feel a like move of the thrill and joy of living thereby. There are millions who can get a little pleasure this way, so why should it be taken from us? But Dr. Muck says it is bad and poisonous. Whether it is better to spend years of time and labor in the drudgery of learning classical music, only to fail ninety-nine times out of a hundred and finally be compelled to satisfy oneself with ragtime, as I have seen over and over again, or to learn ragtime first and then go no further unless properly fitted to do so, is the question.

It is consolling when dealing with critics of ragtime to remember that others, standing high in the world of music, do not all agree with them. Percy Grainger, a very eminent pianist who has also come to the front as a composer for piano and symphony orchestra and won high praise in many lands, has publicly stated that he likes ragtime and doesn't care who knows it. And there are many prominent musicians who feel the same way, so it must have some beauty after all, that one may like without being aesthetically dead. It might be possible that Muck and Fremstad caught a glimpse of the dollar sign floating across their mental vision, and feared that symphony and grand opera might decline as ragtime increased in popularity.

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SR-031	Ramshackle Rag (Snyder) 1911
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SR-033	Foolishness Rag (Weinstein) 1911
SR-034	African Pas' (Kerwin) 1902
SR-035	Ma Ragtime Baby (Stone) 1898
SR-036	The Princess Rag (Scott) 1919
SR-037	Red Onion Rag (Oleman) 1912
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SR-058 Who Let The Cows Out? (Humfeld) 1910
SR-059 Storyville Sport (Tom Shea) 1963
SR-060 The 'Possum Barbecue (Martin) 1899
SR-061 The Minstrel Man (J. Russel Robinson) 1911
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SR-072 That Eccentric Rag (J. Russel Robinson) 1912
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SR-078 Sue (F. Stone) 1902
SR-079 Kyrene (E. J. Stark) 1903
SR-080 Black Diamond Rag (Lodge) 1912
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SR-083 The Lion Tamer Rag (M. Janza) 1913
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CF-500 TREEMONISHA

We still have some reprint copies of Scott Joplin's opera - "Treemonisha", published in 1911. The opera is 230 pages, punched with the standard 3 holes to fit ring-binders..... each $15.00 ppd.

THE RAGTIMER (Back Issues)

The Society has received numerous requests, primarily from new members, for back issues of our publication, THE RAGTIMER. We wish to point out that prior to VOL. 6 (1967), at which time the new magazine format was introduced, our "newsletters" consisted merely of 8 1/2" x 11" collated sheets. However, many of these issues are still available and contain significant, informative articles relative to ragtime. Prices for available back issues are listed herein.

"NEWSLETTERS"	1962 VOL. 1	No's. 1,2,3,7,9.	$0.50
	1963 VOL. 2	No's. 2,3,4,7,8,9,10.	$0.75
	1964 VOL. 3	Complete	$1.00
	1965 VOL. 4	Complete	$1.00
	1966 VOL. 5	No's. 2,3,4,5,6.	$1.00
	1962 - 1966 Incl.	(All available issues)	$3.00
"THE RAGTIMER"	1967 VOL. 7	Complete	$3.00

FOLIOS

CF-800 PLAY THEM RAGS (MILLS)
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CF-802 RAGTIME TREASURES OF JOSEPH LAMB (MILLS)
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CF-804 34 RAGTIME JAZZ CLASSICS (MELROSE)
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CF-806 100 RAGTIME CLASSICS selected by MAX MORATH (DONN)
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BOOKS AND PERIODICALS

X BP-900 THEY ALL PLAYED RAGTIME by RUDI BLESH & HARRIET JANIS
The definitive publication on RAGTIME. Very comprehensive text. THE NEW EDITION. Contains photos, indexes, plus over a dozen newly discovered and recently composed works. The "Society" now has a good supply in stock. All ragtimers should have a copy ..... ppd. $4.50

IMPORTANT

Please note that no listings of commercial recordings are found in this revised price list. Most of the records previously listed had been supplied by a local distributor, and we find that delivery on these items is not dependable. Rather than subject our members to lengthy delays, the Ragtime Society will no longer stock these items. We will, however, from time to time, list recordings pertaining to ragtime with the source from which they may be obtained.

"SOCIETY" RECORDS AVAILABLE FROM STOCK

RSR-01	CLASSIC & MODERN RAGS ..... Tom Shea	@ $5.00	
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For records mailed overseas, other than Great Britain, add $1.00 for a single record, and 25¢ for each additional record.

RECORD REVIEW

by
TEX
WYNDHAM

Columbia CL 1780
James P. Johnson: Father Of The Stride Piano

Selections: Carolina Shout (recorded 10/18/21); Weeping Blues, Worried And Lonesome Blues (6/28/23); All That I Had Is Gone, Snowy Morning Blues (2/25/27); If Dreams Came True, Fascination, The Mule Walk, Lonesome Reverie, Blueberry Rhyme (6/14/39) - - all piano solos.

How Could I Be Blue? (1/31/30), piano duet with spoken patter by Johnson and Clarence Williams.

Memories Of You, Old-Fashioned Love, Swingin' At The Lido, Havin' A Ball, Hungry Blues (6/15/39) by Henry Allen, trumpet; J. C. Higginbotham, trombone; Gene Sedric, tenor saxophone; James P. Johnson, piano; Eugene Fields, guitar; Pops Foster, string bass; Sid Catlett, drums; Anna Robinson, vocal on 'Hungry Blues'.

About two or three years ago, Columbia was in the middle of a reissue program that was then by far the best one around. The Lps contained lots of music (this Johnson Lp has nearly 49 minutes worth), good sound (particularly considering that some selections were recorded before the days of electrical recording), and interesting and informative liner notes. Some of the multiple-Lp packages came in boxed sets which included a booklet containing an excellent essay on the subject of the set, complete discographical data, and some rare photographs.

For some reason, Columbia has greatly slowed down this program recently. To my knowledge, all the reissues are still available, but I have heard rumors that some may be (or possibly have already been) deleted. Consequently, although this Johnson Lp is not a new issue, it seems appropriate to review it so that Society members who haven't yet heard of it may still get a copy -- or take a second look at some of the other reissues (the others are more for jazz than ragtime fans) in the series.

Actually, anyone familiar with TAPR or traditional jazz shouldn't need much more than the information given above to decide to buy this album. Johnson was one of the best pianists of the New York 'rent party' school -- a technician of incredible skill and a composer of first-rank rhythmic and melodic invention. His work on this Lp is well up to his usual excellent standard and it is a joy throughout.

As a bonus, it is worth mentioning that none of the ten tracks recorded in 1939 has ever been released previously in the United States. Moreover, the Lp contains some selections composed by Johnson, including several of his most famous tunes, such as "Old-Fashioned Love", "Snowy Morning Blues", "The Mule Walk" and, to top it off, the flashy and difficult piano solo that is most closely associated with Johnson, "Carolina Shout".

Although the band tracks are well done, with good work by famous jazzmen and fine Johnson piano, they will be of little interest to ragtimers who don't like jazz. In fact, they are not really in the traditional jazz idiom; instead they fall more into the "mainstream" small-band swing style of the late '30's.

Even so, most traditional jazz fans will be happy to listen to any band that includes Johnson on piano, especially one that's as star-studded and clean-sounding as this one. And if you just like ragtime, you'll find few Lps that have as much good piano work as you'll hear in the ten solo tracks. For both historical and musical reasons, this is one of the 'must' records, at least for me; if you miss your chance to get a copy, don't bother making any offers for mine.

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REPRINT CLUB NEWS

The last mailout in CHAPTER IV of the REPRINT CLUB is ready to be mailed. As is pointed out in the letter which will accompany this mailout, we are rescheduling the new chapter (CHAPTER V) to the calendar year '1969'.

This final mailout of five rags includes "RASTUS ON PARADE" by cakewalk composer - Kerry Mills. It represents an excellent example of mainstream ragtime at the dawn of the Ragtime Era. The elements of ragtime syncopation are to be found in their formulative stages. In the following year, Kerry Mills launched his publishing firm - F. A. Mills, and in 1897, issued "At a Georgia Camp Meeting". One member, a devotee of Kerry Mills, points out that the words added to the last theme makes use of colloquial expressions in 1895 that are still part of today's usage:

"When he is walking
'Taint no bluff
He puts 'em in the shade
No use in talking
He's hot stuff
Is Rastus When On Parade."

Another BIG Rag in this mailout is of course - THE LILY RAG by Charley Thompson. It's a difficult rag to play, but once mastered, is a dandy. It was published by the Syndicate Music Co. in 1914 and was arranged by Artie Matthews, composer of the five famous Pastime Rags. A good old march and two-step is MA' RAGTIME QUEEN penned by J. F. Barth and published personnally back in 1902. This number also contains some rather interesting lyrics. Under the pseudonym of Raymond Birch is the fine composition - CLOUD KISSER RAG, published and of course written by Charles L. Johnson in 1911. Last but not least, is BILLIKIN RAG (spelled this way on title page but spelled 'BILLIKEN' on the cover), by Etilmon J. Stark. Two other rags by this writer have been reprinted by the Society - Kyrene and Brainstorm Rag, the latter under the penname 'Bud Manchester'. The chromatic opening is of doubtful musical quality but the second strain carries with it a nice lilting raggy melody. Real fun to play!

Don't forget those renewals to CHAPTER V - we've got many real surprises!

SOMETHING DOING...

JOHN ARPIN - appearing at the Sutton Place Hotel (Stop 33), Bay and Wellesley in Toronto between 5:30 and 8:00 p. m. ; also, at Ports of Call between th ehours of 9:00 p. m. and 1 a. m. with the fine clarinetist - HENRY CUESTA.

DON BURNS - appearing in Hamburg, New York.

JOHNNY MADDOX - appearing at the Cherry Creek Inn, Denver, Colorado from December 17, 1968 - January 18, 1969. .

KEN MAYHERCY (RAGTIME $ BILL) - appearing at "The Gallery" in Steamboat Springs, Colorado till April, 1969.

WALLY ROSE - appearing at the Gold Dust Lounge, 247 Powell St. in San Francisco.

RALPH SUTTON - appearing at Sunnie's Rendezvous in Aspen, Colo. all winter.

TREBOR TICHENOR and THE ST. LOUIS RAGTIMERS - always can be heard on the Goldenrod Showboat in St. Louis, Missouri.

TEX WYNDHAM - at Tyler's Restaurant, 1101 Philadelphia Pike with his own band- the Red Lion Jazz Band. (our record reviewer).

Performers, keep us posted on your whereabouts and your schedule will appear on this page.

COUNTRY CLUB

RAG TIME TWO-STEP

By The King of Rag Time Writers

SCOTT JOPLIN

COMPOSER OF
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SUGAR CANE RAG.
PINE APPLE RAG ETC.

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